

In the Claims:

The current status of all claims is listed below and supercedes all previous lists of claims.

Please cancel claims 1-12 and add new claims 13-20 as follows:

1-12. (cancelled).

13. (new) A medical device sealed in gas tight packaging, wherein the medical device comprises a latent marking comprising an oxidisable dye which becomes visible after a predetermined time following exposure of the device to air and further comprising a reducing agent, wherein prior to the opening of the packaging the marking remains invisible and undeveloped and wherein after a period of time from the opening of the packaging the marking becomes visible.

14. (new) A medical device according to claim 13 in which the latent marking is etched into the surface of the device and the marking is obscured by an opaque layer prior to exposure of the device to air, wherein the opaque layer changes to clear or colourless following exposure of the device to air.

15. (new) A medical device according to claim 13 in which the latent marking is carried on a label irremovably adhered to the surface of the device.

16. (new) A medical device according to claim 15 in which the latent marking comprises dyes or chemicals applied in such manner to yield a warning message in the visible spectrum following exposure.

17. (new) A method of informing an individual of the use status of a medical device within gas tight packaging comprising including a latent marking on the medical device, wherein the latent marking comprises an oxidisable dye and a reducing agent, wherein the oxidisable dye

becomes visible after a predetermined time following exposure of the medical device within the gas tight packaging to air, and wherein prior to the opening of the packaging the marking remains invisible and undeveloped, and wherein after a period of time from the opening of the packaging the marking becomes visible.

18. (new) A method according to claim 17 wherein the latent marking is etched into the surface of the medical device and the marking is obscured by an opaque layer prior to exposure of the device to air, wherein the opaque layer changes to clear or colourless following exposure of the device to air.

19. (new) A method according to claim 17 in which the latent marking is carried on a label irremovably adhered to the surface of the device.

20. (new) A method according to claim 19 in which the latent marking comprises dyes or chemicals applied in such manner to yield a warning message in the visible spectrum following exposure.